

REMARKS

This Reply to Office Action is responsive to the Office Action mailed on April 5, 2006. Claims 1-21 are pending in the present Application.

With this Reply, Applicants submit a Petition for a One-Month Extension of Time, making Applicants' Reply due on or before August 7, 2006. Accordingly, Applicants' Reply is timely filed.

The Examiner rejected claims 1, 2 and 10 under § 102(b) as being anticipated by *Lane* (U.S. 1,062,015). The Examiner also rejected claims 1-3, 5 and 10 under § 102(c) as being anticipated by *Stone, et al.* (U.S. 6,884,014). The Examiner further indicated that claims 4 and 6-9 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. The Examiner also indicated that claims 11-20 are allowed. Applicants appreciate the indications that claims 4 and 6-9 contain allowable subject matter and claims 11-20 are allowed. However, Applicants submit that claims 1-21 are allowable over the cited prior art, taken alone or in combination.

As best seen in Figs. 8 and 13-15, claim 1 requires a ringpost 26 comprising an outer member 42 and an inner member 40 secured within the outer member 42. The outer member 42 has a rib 48 (see Fig. 15) along an interior surface, and the inner member 40 has a groove 64 (see Fig. 15) along an exterior surface that receives the rib 48. The outer member 42 rotates about the inner member 40 after the inner member 40 is secured within the outer member 42, as described in specification paragraph [0040].

Lane does not disclose, teach or suggest the elements recited in independent claim 1.

Lane discloses a pipe coupling having a clamping collar. The clamping collar has a member 4 having an interior recess 5 in a ground annular bearing edge 6. An integral nut is provided with a wrench-engaging surface 7 projecting from member 4, and a flange 11 projects from the threaded bore of the nut into recess 5. Contrary to the Examiner's contention, *Lane* does not disclose member 4 having a rib along a surface of interior screw threads 8, nor does *Lane* disclose pipe 1 having a groove along an exterior surface that receives the rib. Moreover, even if *Lane* disclosed member 4 having a rib and pipe 1 having a groove that receives the rib, *Lane* does not disclose, teach or suggest that member 4 is rotatable about pipe 1 after pipe 1 is secured within member 4.

In fact, *Lane* teaches away from the present invention, because *Lane* teaches that the clamping collar is turned on the threaded end of pipe 1 until biting edge 6 of the collar engages the surface of the wall, thus ensuring a tight joint (see Fig. 2). Modifying member 4 to allow rotation about pipe 1 after pipe 1 is secured within member 4 would defeat the purpose of ensuring a tight joint fit against the surface of the wall. Accordingly, Applicants submit that claim 1 is patentable over *Lane*. Claims 2-9 are asserted to be allowable based on their dependency from allowable claim 1.

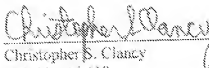
Independent claim 10 requires a ringpost assembly 20 comprising a first ringpost 26, as claimed in independent claim 1, and a second ringpost 28. Thus, for at least the reasons discussed above regarding independent claim 1, Applicants submit that independent claim 10 is patentable over *Lane*.

Stone does not disclose, teach or suggest the elements recited in independent claim 1. *Stone* discloses a tolerance compensating mounting device 100 comprising a bushing 101 that has external threads for securing bushing 101 to part P. Bushing 101 also has internal threads to engage the external threads of bolt 200. Contrary to the Examiner's contention, *Stone* does not disclose, teach or suggest bushing 101 having a rib along an interior surface, nor does *Stone* disclose bolt 200 having a groove along an exterior surface that receives the rib. As shown in Fig.15, collar 500 may be engaged with and between bolt threads 202 and bushing bore inner surface 108, but collar 500 is not part of bushing 101. Moreover, even if *Stone* disclosed bushing 101 having a rib and bolt 200 having a groove that receives the rib, *Stone* does not disclose, teach or suggest that bushing 101 is rotatable about bolt 200 after bolt 200 is secured within bushing 101. Accordingly, Applicants submit that claim 1 is allowable over *Stone*. Claims 2-9 are asserted to be allowable based on their dependency from allowable claim 1.

Independent claim 10 requires a ringpost assembly 20 comprising a first ringpost 26, as claimed in independent claim 1, and a second ringpost 28. Thus, for at least the reasons discussed above regarding independent claim 1, Applicants submit that independent claim 10 is patentable over *Stone*.

In view of the above, Applicants submit that claims 1-21 are allowable and favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Christopher S. Clancy", is written over a horizontal line.

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Dated: August 7, 2006

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